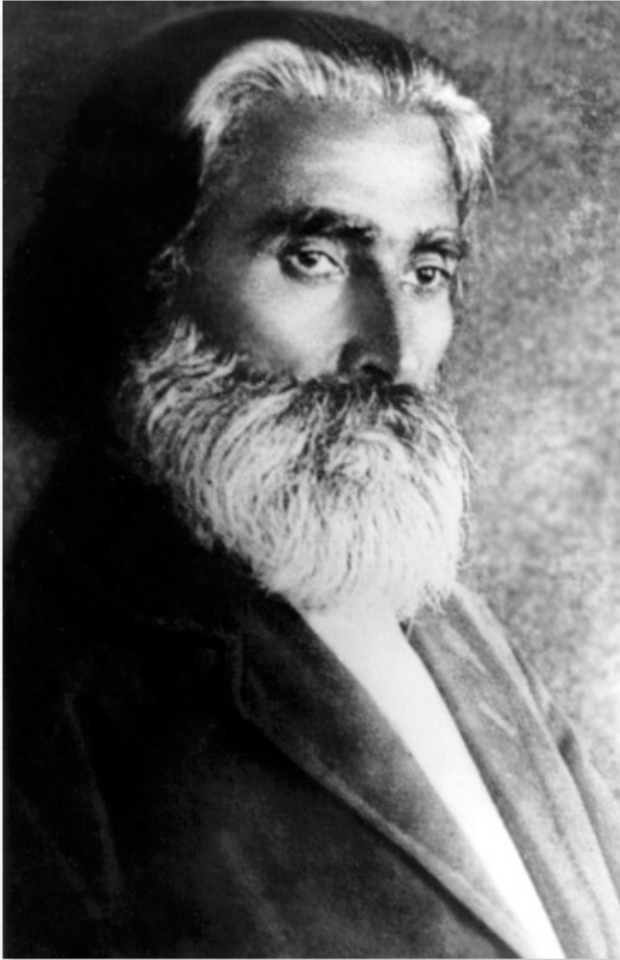


The Spiritual Master Peter Deunov

The concept that every man must live for himself belongs to the old way of life. The idea that every man must live for the Whole – here is the great basis of the new life, of the New Culture. This basic concept now transforms humanity's entire life. Today's world moves into a new form. New morality is being created. This new morality with its first imperative to live for the Whole shall change the world dramatically. Humanity is on the brink of a new era now. It moves from the era of mechanical creation to the era of organic development, from the stage of mechanical reconstruction to that of internal revival. People suffer greatly because they move from the mechanical to the organic process of collective life.

Founding



Peter Deunov started his work in 1897 in Varna where he founded a "Society for the Elevation of the Religious Spirit of the Bulgarian People" which later grew into a Spiritual Society "White Brotherhood". Among his followers from the very beginning there were bright personalities from the Bulgarian national liberation movement such as Dr. Georgi Mirkovich, Anastasia Uzunova - Zhelyazkova (revolutionary Atanas Uzunov's sister), writers Dimitar Golov, Mihalaki Georgiev, and many others.

Since the beginning of the 20th century the Master started summoning his disciples to annual meetings. Those were meetings of brothers, called gatherings. The first was held in Varna in July 1900 and was called "Meeting of the Chain". The Master invited only three people to this gathering – Dr. Mirkovich from Sliven, a Catholic, Penyu Kirov from Burgas, a Protestant and Todor Stoimenov from Pazardzhik, an Orthodox Christian. Then one of his disciples thought: "Here we are just the three of us, gathered here, and one of us is old and already leaving this world. The other two are but too few for this important mission." And the Master thus replied to his thought: *"You are few indeed but in the future you will be thousands and millions."*



The following years turned the gatherings into a tradition. They were held in August – in 1901 and 1902 in Burgas, from 1903 to 1909 in Varna, from 1910 to 1925 in Veliko Tarnovo, from 1926 to 1928 in Sofia and in Vitosha Mountains and from 1929 until today in Sofia and at the Seven Lakes in Rila Mountains. Every year the number of the Master's disciples and followers grows steadily.



Between the two World Wars

In the years following the end of World War I the White Brotherhood penetrated nearly all social circles of Bulgarian people, it was found in most of the towns and villages in the country and its members were over 40 000.

Gradually the first generation of disciples from the Revival period was replaced by the generation of young intellectuals from newly independent Bulgaria, born around the turn of the century. Those were mainly teachers by education but there were also many lawyers, doctors and military. The peculiar Bulgarian Christian teaching left the community centre Sunday preaching behind and gradually became a life-philosophy, ethical standard and morality for many Bulgarians.

In 1924 Wheat Grain Magazine was first published as the official organ of the White Brotherhood in Bulgaria. The first printing house of the brotherhood was opened.



In 1926 just outside Sofia, on the so called Bouchier's meadows, a settlement of the brotherhood started to appear called "Izgrev" ("Sunrise"). Nowadays there is a Residential District of the modern city in its place with the same name. The brotherhood bought land plots where first tents were put up and later small wooden huts were built. Hundreds of the Master's followers lived according to Christian social principles—spiritual culture, brotherly legal relationships and communal economic life. The Master brought together communists and anarchists, officers in the Tzar's army and high ranking civil servants; agricultural workers and intellectuals; workers and artists. In "Izgrev" the Master created a unique model for communal life in which everybody could combine his professional realization in society with purposeful and beneficial spiritual work.



Land was cultivated by all and its fruits were consumed by everybody in the settlement.

Everybody helped and worked to the best of his abilities. In 1927 a communal centre for prayers was built where – after it was completed – the Master delivered his lectures and talks. A humble hut was built for him where he lived in modesty till the end of his days on earth. There was music in "Izgrev", esoteric sciences were studied and people learned to live like brothers.



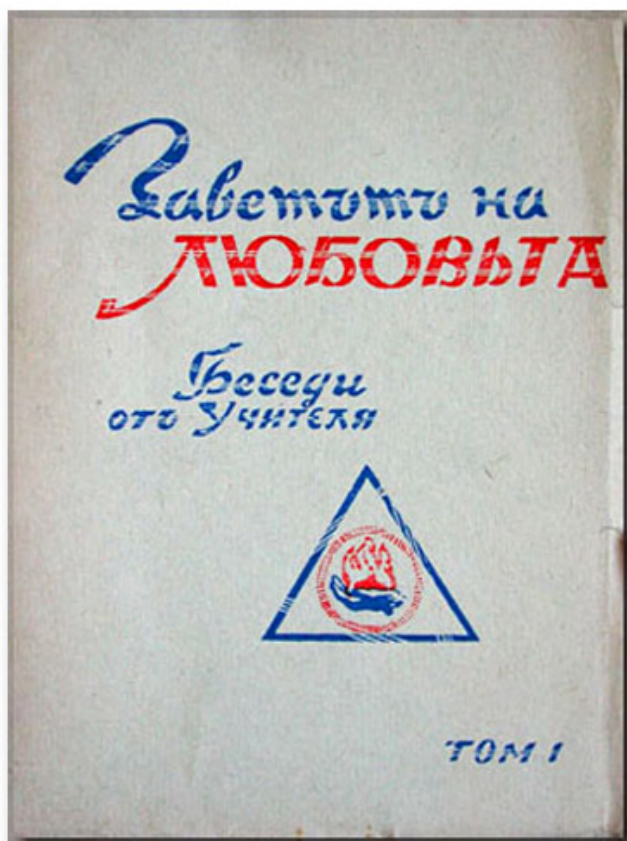
In 1929 the summer gatherings at the Seven Lakes in Rila were started. The disciples learned how to maintain contact with nature there.

By the 30s of the 20th century the Master created the Paneurhythmy – a series of exercises composed of melody, text and plastic movements. In 1942 the Ministry of education passed a ruling to introduce Paneurhythmy to Bulgarian schools to be studied.

At the beginning of 1944 during the bombardments of Sofia the Master and a group of disciples moved to the village of Marchaevo, near Sofia where he lived in the house (nowadays a museum) of his disciple Temelko Gyorev. He returned to Izgreva on 19th October 1944. On December 20th 1944 he delivered his lecture Last Words to the General class.

The Master came to the end of his earthly path on December 27th 1944.

The Brotherhood after 1944



When the Master was gone his disciples continued to print his lectures. The gatherings in Rila were still being held. The 40s and 50s of the 20th century were hard years for the White Brotherhood. The disciples were persecuted and tried in court. All the lands in "Izgreva" as well as the printing houses of the brotherhood were expropriated by the state and the books were destroyed. On December 6th 1957 General Anev ordered that all books of the Master be confiscated in the next three days. In 1958 the state militia disrupted the White Brotherhood, nationalized the property in "Izgreva", confiscated the printing house and interned the School's followers to different corners of Bulgaria. Not a single word of his teaching was published until 1990. Summer gatherings in Rila were banned and the disciples were forced to meet secretly in small groups. All through the years of socialist regime the only place where the life of the Brotherhood continued was the garden in Aitos.



The teaching around the world

The teaching of Peter Deunov started to get response abroad as early as 30s of the 20th century. At first there was interest in France, Russia and the Baltic region, and later on his Word reached Canada, USA, Britain, Switzerland, India, etc. All over the world people read and practice Deunov's teaching, they do the Paneurhythmy, play musical exercises, and recite formulas and all this in done Bulgarian.



His legacy and influence is strongest in France where in 1947 his disciple Mihail Ivanov founded the French society Universal White Brotherhood in Paris. Nowadays Mihail Ivanov is known around the world with his spiritual name Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov; his lectures which mainly interpret topics from Master Peter Deunov's school have been translated in dozens of languages.

Nowadays Master Peter Deunov has thousands of followers on five continents. There are people familiar with his teaching in places as Hawaii, Madagascar, Tasmania, Martinique, Venezuela, and Congo.